

**MINUTES OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2001**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, October 9, 2001, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by Chairperson Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the committee's previously distributed meeting agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Burmeister called the Proficiency Testing (PT) committee meeting to order after attendance roll call.

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes

The minutes from the teleconference of September 25, 2001 will be distributed to the committee for their review and edits. The committee will vote to change and accept or accept as written these minutes at the next teleconference.

Action Items

Action Items will be deferred for discussion during the next teleconference.

PT Reporting Limits

Ms. Cindy Nettrour was absent from this teleconference, therefore, Ms. Burmeister will obtain status from Ms. Nettrour and update the committee at the next teleconference. It was determined that more data is required because there has not been enough feedback regarding whether the committee will include the reporting limits into the revised Field of Testing tables. It was recommended and agreed that this topic be discussed at the NELAC-7i Conference to obtain the feedback needed.

Analyte Groups

Ms. RaeAnn Haynes reported that she and Mr. Anand Mudambi discussed this topic and determined that it would be beneficial to wait until they received more feedback from the conference. Ms. Haynes posed taking this issue to the NELAC-7i Conference for discussion and feedback. The problem is that there is still a need for the AAs and the laboratories to track by analyte to be sure that the laboratory is not repeatedly failing the same analyte. Ms. Burmeister suggested that the committee stress to the NELAC-7i Conference that this looks good, but in all practicality, it is probably not going to work. It was suggested that the AAs track per the 80% passing criteria but it was felt that this is another issue to be discussed—that the AA workloads are already full and they

should not be asked to take on more work. It was again stated that if a laboratory fails an analyte group with a score of <80% for two out of three PT studies, then they will lose accreditation for the entire group.

Mr. Miller indicated that putting analytes into analyte classes could be done by method for the entire wastewater or drinking water volatiles. However, from an enforcement point of view, it is much easier to track each analyte. Current software is already tracking passing and failing by analyte. The committee discussed the benefits of tracking the analytes. Ms. Burmeister indicated that it is the committee's responsibility to illustrate what we have found out and inform the conference of the pros and cons of each issue. Ms. Haynes suggested that the committee present this issue from three perspectives—the labs, the AAs and the PT providers. Ms. Haynes and Mr. Mudambi will prepare a presentation for the NELAC-7i PT session. Mr. Miller will poll the AAs at the next meeting and ask for interest in analyte groups.

Analyte and Method Code SOP

The committee discussed Mr. Mike Miller's revisions to the PT SOP, Section 2.3, "Guidelines for accepting changes to the NELAC Analyte Code List and NELAC Method Code List." Mr. Miller stated that a primary requirement for adding a method or an analyte is that at least one AA must accredit for it. Other criteria for consideration should include: a) the method or analyte is promulgated in the Code of Federal Regulations by a USEPA program; b) the USEPA Office of Water adopts an Alternate Test Procedure; c) the USEPA Office of Solid Hazardous Waste finalizes a draft method, and d) the USEPA Superfund awards a new statement of work. The question arose on how to treat Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS) methods. Mr. Miller said that New Jersey uses the reference method which is included on the application. Ms. Burmeister indicated that if we are going to make this as standard as possible regardless of their system, we must assign each one of the PBMS references a separate number. It was suggested by Mr. Miller that PBMS have its own digit for coding which will indicate that it is an altered method but the same reference. Ms. Burmeister stated that this case might arise when we determine technology codes. She stated that when the newly ratified scope of accreditation goes into effect, she envisions creating technology codes to go along with the method codes. This would allow all equivalent methods to fall under one technology. Ms. Burmeister also stated that this topic may need to be deferred until we see how the accrediting authority will handle a PBMS situation. The committee further discussed the options for signifying a PBMS code and whether it is similar enough to a the reference methods or if it is completely different from a reference method. If it is different, then it should be issued a completely different code. If it is similar, an additional PBMS code would be added to the existing method code. This would allow more flexibility for the accrediting authority to clarify that the laboratory just made a minimal change to the method. Mr. Miller will revise his draft revisions for discussion at the next teleconference.

Memo for Obtaining Problematic Analytes and Acceptance Criteria

The committee discussed and accepted the changes Ms. Burmeister made to the draft memorandum addressed to all PT Providers, Accrediting Authorities and Laboratories requesting input regarding problematic analytes and corresponding acceptance criteria. Ms. Burmeister stated she has obtained email addresses for most of the state accrediting authorities but is lacking email addresses for

laboratories who could address the memo. It was stated and agreed that Ms. Burmeister will contact Mr. Jerry Parr to obtain these email addresses. Ms. Burmeister will email the memo this week.

EPA/NIST Items

Ms. Burmeister reported that the NELAC Board of Directors finalized the letter with regard to the EPA PT database and the EPA Criteria document. It was sent to Mr. Henry Longest of the Office of Research and Development and to Mr. James Hanlon, Office of Water, USEPA on October 1, 2001.

Comments/Questions

No comments or questions were discussed.

Membership and Outreach Committee Update

This topic was deferred until the next teleconference meeting.

Other issues/items

Ms. Burmeister will not be available for the next teleconference and the committee agreed to cancel the October 23, 2001 teleconference.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Burmeister adjourned the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next teleconference is scheduled for November 6, 2001.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2001**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1	Uniform electronic reporting format	Ongoing
2	Mr. Mike Miller will revise draft guidance criteria for adding analytes and methods to the master code lists.	11/06/01
3	Ms. Haynes and Mr. Mudambi will prepare a presentation on analyte groups for the NELAC-7i PT session.	11/20/01
4	Mr. Miller will poll the AAs at the next meeting and ask for interest in analyte groups.	11/06/01
5	Ms. Burmeister will email a memo to PT providers, AAs and labs requesting data on problematic analytes.	10/12/01

**PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2001**

Name	Affiliation	Address
Burmeister, Barbara, Chairperson	Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene	T: (608) 265-1100 F: (608) 265-1114 E: burmie@mail.slh.wisc.edu
Griggs, John	USEPA/OAR	T: (334) 270-3450 F: (334) 270-3454 E: griggs.john@epa.gov
Haynes, RaeAnn	State of Oregon DEQ	T: (503) 229-5983 F: (503) 229-6924 E: haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us
Jackson, Larry (absent)	Environmental Quality Management	T: (603) 924-6852 F: (603) 924-6346 E: lpjackson@msn.com
McAninch, Tom	Eastman Chemical Company	T: (903)237-5473 F: (903)237-6395 E: twmcan@eastman.com
Miller, Michael	NJ DEP - Lab Certification Office of QA	T: (609) 633-2804 F: (609) 777-1774 E: mmiller1@dep.state.nj.us
Mudambi, Anand (absent)	US Army Corps of Engineers	T: (703) 603-8796 F: (703) 603-9112 E: mudambi.anand@epa.gov
Nettrour, Cindy (absent)	American Water Works Services Co., Inc.	T: (618) 239-0516 F: (618) 235-6349 E: cnetttrou@bellevillelab.com
Obenauf, Ralph	SPEX CertiPrep, Inc.	T: (732) 549-7144 F: (732) 603-9647 E: robenauf@spexcsp.com
Steinman, Marykay	M.J. Reider Associates, Inc.	T: (610)374-5129 F: (610)374-7234 E: msteinman@mjureider.com
Brediger, Arlyn (contractor support)	Anteon Corporation	T: (702) 731-4233 F: (702) 731-4027 E: abrediger@anteon.com
Person, Danell (contractor support)	Anteon Corporation	T: (702) 731-4158 F: (702) 731-4027 E: dperson@anteon.com

